



## BATS

Bats have been surrounded by superstition and have been feared and treated badly by humans as a result. But in fact, these animals are almost always harmless, or even beneficial to human interests.

As the only major predators of night flying insects, bats play an important role in controlling many insect pests. A single bat can consume as many as *500* insects in just one hour, or nearly *3,000* every night.

### Bats In Homes & Buildings

There are primarily *two* scenarios in which people and bats find themselves in conflict:

1. When a lone bat flies into a building
2. When a maternity colony of bats roosts in a building

### If you encounter a bat flying in a room, follow this procedure:

- Shut all doors leading into other rooms to confine the bat to as small an area as possible.
- Open all windows and doors leading outside to give the bat a chance to escape (Don't worry about other bats flying in from the outside).
- Remove pets from the room, leave the lights on, stand quietly against a wall or door, and watch until the bat leaves.
- Do not try to herd a bat towards a window. Just allow the bat to settle down (within 10-15 minutes), locate the open window or door, and fly out of the room.

**NOTE: Do not pick up and handle bats. They can carry rabies, and a bat that allows itself to be handled may be sick. The small teeth of bats produce a small wound that can go unnoticed. As a result, the Department of Public Health must be notified and will test a bat for rabies if the person(s) involved answer "YES" to any of the situations below:**

- Did you see or feel the bat bite you?
- Do you think the bat might have been in any room where people were asleep or unconscious?
- Did you find the bat in a room with a child, mentally/physically disabled person, or intoxicated person?

## House Bat Maternity Colonies

Most bats in the Northeast roost in secluded locations away from humans, but two species, the *little brown bat* and the *big brown bat*, often attract attention because they repeatedly roost in buildings.

If you have a bat colony roosting in your house and want to remove it, you must use the proper methods to do so:

**Identify Entrances:** Bats commonly enter at points where joined materials have warped, shrunk, or pulled away from one another. Some common points of access occur at louvered vents with loose screening, at the roof peak, and in areas where flashing has pulled from the roof / siding.

**Sealing Entrances:** Once the entrances have been located, the next step is to seal these openings. Timing is important:

- Jan-April: Seal entrances before bats return to the building.
- May-Aug: Watch bats to identify entrances. Do not seal openings. Otherwise young, flightless bats will be trapped in the building.
- Aug-Oct: Install one-way doors. *One-way doors are pieces of mesh or screening placed over a bat entrance to form a long sleeve or tent.* These doors allow a bat to exit at night, but prevent their re-entry at dawn.
- Nov-Dec: Seal entrances once bats have left the building. (If you suspect bats are hibernating in the building, install a one-way door in Sept-Oct.)



Animal Management Services  
 Environmental Health Services  
 111 W. Hunting Park Avenue  
 Philadelphia, PA 19140  
 (215) 685-9009  
[www.phila.gov/health](http://www.phila.gov/health)